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ED 011 439 FL 000 298

A SYSTEM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPEAKING IN THE TEACHING OF RUSSIAN TO FOREIGNERS.

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PUB DATE 65

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.68 17P.

DESCRIPTORS- *AUDIOLINGUAL SKILLS, *HABIT FORMATION, *LINGUISTIC PATTERNS, *RUSSIAN, *TEACHING TECHNIQUES, SPEECH SKILLS, RUSSIA, MOSCOW UNIVERSITY

WHILE EVERY OTHER ASPECT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IS TODAY SUBORDINATE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPEAKING, PROBLEMS WILL DEVELOP UNLESS THERE IS AN ESSENTIAL REWORKING OF METHODOLOGY AND AN ESTABLISHMENT OF A SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE ORAL FACILITY. CONSCIOUSNESS OF GRAMMATICAL PHENOMENA IS INDISPENSABLE FOR RAPID MASTERY OF SPOKEN RUSSIAN. THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR BY PATTERNS, ADVANTAGEOUS AS THE METHOD MAY BE IN TEACHING SPEAKING IN ANALYTICAL LANGUAGES, IS INAPPROPRIATE FOR RUSSIAN, WHERE ANY LINGUISTIC PATTERN MUST BE SUPPLEMENTED BY RULES OF FORM PRODUCTION. TRAINING IN SPEECH DEVELOPMENT IS PRIMARILY THE FORMING OF HABITS OF DIFFERENTIATION AMONG LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA, FOR WHICH THERE CAN BE NO PURELY MECHANICAL TRAINING. CONSTANT, THOUGHTFUL ACTIVITY AT MOMENTS OF SPEAKING IS ESSENTIAL. HABITS, ONCE FORMED CONSCIOUSLY, ARE INCLUDED IN THE FORMATION OF OTHER CONSCIOUSLY FORMED HABITS UNTIL A COMPLEX OF PHENOMENA EMERGES IN THE MIND OF THE STUDENT. LEXICAL PHENOMENA MUST BE INTERWOVEN WITH GRAMMATICAL PHENOMENA FOR AN ORGANIZED MERGER IN THE MIND OF THE LEARNER. A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES ELABORATE THE SYSTEM--THE USUAL AUDIOLINGUAL METHODS, LISTENING TO TAPES TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSION, NATURAL CLASSROOM DIALOGS, "SHORT-MEMORY" TRAINING, CREATION OF LIFE SITUATIONS, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, AND SPEAKING FROM PICTURES. IN ALL OF THESE, CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE EXISTENCE OF COMMUNICATIVE SPEAKING SITUATIONS IS VITAL. THIS ARTICLE IS A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR FOREIGN TEACHERS OF RUSSIAN (MOSCOW, 1965). (AUTHOR)

A SYSTEM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPEAKING IN THE TEACHING OF RUSSIAN TO FOREIGNERS, By G. A. Bitekhtin, Department of Russian for Foreigners, Moscow State University Lomonosov.

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At present, there is no debate about this premise: work on the development of speaking is fundamental to the teaching of a practical mastery of Russian. All other aspects of teaching are subordinate.

"The mastery of language is speech, an activity of man which demands not so much achievement of theoretical knowledge, as development of creative speech skills on the foundation of conditioned habits and a feeling for language. For this reason, it is necessary to teach not simply language, and not only language, but speech in the language." (Professor B.V. Belyaev, "Methodology and Psychology," Inostrannye yazyki v shkole, 1963, No. 6.)

The problems of developing speaking ability are sometimes understood in a rudimentary fashion: to develop speaking means to do more speaking, and thus the teacher gives oral form to his usual methods of teaching.

Such an approach does not solve the problem. There must be an essential reworking of methodology and an establishment of a system for developing oral facility.

It is paramount that all teaching be structured so that each aspect of the effort directly or indirectly trains students for what is fundamental -- for speech, for communication in the foreign tongue.

When we speak of the development of speech, we have in mind both forms of speech -- oral and written, but of the two, oral speech plays the leading role as the basic means of communication. In the present work, we will touch only upon questions relating to the development of oral speech.

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In any solution of methodological questions, it is necessary to proceed from two basic problems:

1) what to teach -- the selection of material basic to the language;

2) how to teach -- the rationally devised system of instruction based on the findings of psychology and of pedagogical experience and of experimentation.

Both of these problems are equally important in the solution of methodological questions, but in the present article, attention is concentrated on the methodology, i.e. on how to teach the development of speech.

The fundamental goal of practical language teaching is the development of habits of spontaneous speaking in a foreign language, in this instance, Russian.

It is obvious that development of such habits proceed from rehearsed speaking to free, situational speaking. The teacher's task, therefore, consists in organizing for students and facilitating for them the process of transfer from instructionally prepared speaking to speaking in the free sense of the word.

In a methodology for the development of oral facility, two kinds of work must be distinguished:

1) work preparatory to speaking;

2) speaking per se.

From these it follows that there are two types of training exercises:

1) exercises preparatory to speaking;

2) speaking exercises per se.

In preparatory exercises, the attention of students is equally occupied by two aspects: by the content of what is being said, and by the linguistic means of expression.

In speaking exercises *per se*, however, primary attention is focused upon the content. The form, since already known, causes no serious difficulty. Speaking exercises *per se*, have a place at every stage of learning, i.e. every stage ends in speaking exercises.

Exercises (preparatory) include:

1) phonetic exercises, intonational exercises;
2) linguistic exercises, i.e. those promoting comprehension of the structure of sentences and learning of lexical forms;
3) exercises promoting the accumulation of vocabulary;
4) exercises training in listening perception and comprehension, and in the reproduction of learned material;
5) exercises teaching students a definite plan of work in allowing mastery of language, and exercises which train the memory.

There is no sharp line of demarcation between exercises preparatory to speaking and speaking exercises *per se*, but there is a deep qualitative distinction; that is, thanks to a correctly and efficiently organized system of exercises preparatory to speaking, a gradual acquisition of linguistic habits and skills results in unrestrained oral communication in the foreign tongue.

In an effort to examine the significance of the above-mentioned kinds of oral work, we shall not dwell on phonetics. It remains but to mention, that subsequent work in oral facility will be made more successful and easier for the student to the extent that he has had thorough work in phonetics and has had an opportunity to do articulatory exercises. There is a direct relationship here.

As for the mastery of the grammatical constructions of the language, it should be noted that when adults learn a language, awareness of grammatical phenomena is indispensable for the most rapid mastery. Learning the grammatical system of a language, however, is not an end-in-itself. It, too, is only a means of developing oral facility. The question, of course, is how can grammar become an integral part of oral training. Of late, the teaching of grammar by patterns has become widespread. This method enjoys its greatest advantages and is most attractive in the sphere of speech development. But we (in the U.S.S.R.) do not yet have the linguistic material worked out for the application of this method -- there is neither a collection of constructions, nor the methodology for their introduction and reinforcement.

Frequently, when people speak of learning a language by patterns they forget about the specific character of the language in question, and they not infrequently transfer to the teaching of Russian, for example, the principles of working by patterns developed by English and American methodologists (Hornby, Fries).

English and Russian, however, are languages of different systems. A pattern in an analytical language is more effective than a pattern can be in an inflected language, such as Russian.

Thus, in English there is but one construction for the expression of the object: I read the book -- S - P - O; for Russian, on the other hand, we have:

	Sing.	Plur.
	stol.	stoly.
	brata.	brat'ev.
Ya vizhu	brata.	brat'ev.
	sestru.	sester.
	sestru.	
	tetrad'.	

In Russian, any linguistic pattern must be supplemented by rules defining how the forms are produced.

This means that training in speech development in the learning of Russian is first of all the forming of habits of differentiation among linguistic phenomena, and precisely on this basis arise mastery; memorization of constructions, forms, and even lexical units.

That is why composites of features for training exercises come so easily. For example, prepositions v - na, iz - s, cherez - posle, k - u - ot.

There can be no purely mechanical training for the mastery of grammatical phenomena. "Methods which place the adult learner in the position of a child can never compensate for what he loses thereby, and they can only interfere with advantages which the adult has over the child." (A reference to the direct method of teaching languages - Inostrannye yazyki v shkole, 1972, No. 3, p. 88.

Reinforcement of new material in the speech of students, furthermore, cannot be grounded and organized only by recurrent repetition. It is imperative that repetition be conducted according to a definite plan when the analytical possibilities of students' minds are maximally conducive to this reinforcement.

It is impossible, for example, to teach the use of conjunctions without analysis of the constructions as can be seen in complex sentences with chto and chtoby:

On skazal, chto ya prishel rano.

On skazal, chtoby ya prishel poran'she.

For the mastery of such constructions, various exercises are useful: completion, substitution, series of questions with verbs requiring a specific conjunction -- all this promotes the achievement of quicker, more flexible connections and associations.

Thus, the development of oral habits can be successful only with the greatest possible mental activity of students. This demands 1) an understanding of the content of what is expressed; 2) an understanding of the grammatical structure (the possibility of transferral to other situations); 3) mental activity at the moment of the speech exercise, i.e. there must be thoughtful activity and not simply repetition of what has been perceived audially.

At the initial stage, this approach is especially opportune -- affording a means of mastery of specific models, the simplest of the language.

Soon, however, these models turn out to be insufficient. Striving to escape the framework of the models, the student who earlier spoke correctly begins to make mistakes. A problem arises for the teacher: As the lexical store is enriched, there must be a compensatory broadening of the grammatical base, especially the syntactic base.

At the first stage of instruction, of course, the most frequently used constructions must be introduced, so that the student may master material necessary for daily life.

At the second stage of instruction, however, there must be a broadening and a reinforcement of the supply of constructions which are at the student's disposal. Work on these can become basic to further work in the development of speaking.

A broadening and expansion of constructions, however, are sometimes understood only as syntactic expansion, e.g.

He is going. -- Where?

He is going to the institute. -- When?

In the morning he is going to the institute.

This is only one kind of expansion of the construction -- a kind used at the beginning and intermediate stages of instruction. But this is not the limit and extent of subsequent work in using constructions which have been mastered: new lexico-grammatical material is introduced which lends itself to inclusion in known constructions. Synonymous constructions are introduced, as for example, when other conjunctions suggest themselves as substitutes for kogda and are distinguished from it in meaning as well as in style (posle togo kak, s tekh por kak, kak tol'ko, poka, poka ne, etc.)

And finally, more subtle refinements of thought peculiar to constructions are revealed to students -- an intrinsic expansion of constructions -- which affords mastery of the entire lexico-semantic wealth found in the category of verbal aspect in Russian, short and long-form adjective, etc.

Thus, primary linguistic habits are formed in the process of working with one somewhat isolated linguistic phenomenon. These habits are subsequently included in the formation of other habits. Finally emerges a complex of phenomena in the mind of the student -- a chain of associations, an inclusion of every given construction in the general system of the language -- a system which gradually takes shape in the mind of the learner.

In the refinement of linguistic habits and skills, to repeat, a properly and efficiently organized system of repetition does play a prominent role. It must not be mechanical, however. Is it really a good thing when three or four students in turn repeat one and the same text in the classroom? Hardly! And in general, it may be said, a retelling of a text in slavish imitation of the original is the least efficient form of work.

In the organization of repetition and reinforcement of material which has been studied, the following must be taken into account:

1) Language work of any kind is carried out in a lexico-grammatical context -- it isn't pure vocabulary and it isn't pure grammar.
2) In any language-training exercise, the teacher directs himself to the thinking and analytical powers of the learner in a form which is within the potentialities of the student and expedient to the situation.

Recurrent repetition of one construction in class may be permitted when students are experiencing difficulties with pronunciation of a given construction (articulation, rhythm, intonation), but to reinforce new material only through recurrent repetition is inefficient under conditions which apply here (in the U.S.S.R.).

Performing uniform exercises which are mechanical in character exhausts students, distracts their attention, and does not produce the desired results.

That is why students find a lack of uniformity attractive in insertion-type and other forms of writing drills. And that, too, is why the retelling of stories does not always turn out well.

3) The mastery of lexical and grammatical material as a complex process in the elaboration of habits of oral speech has special significance. The basic principle underlying this might be formulated as follows: New vocabulary is reinforced in familiar grammatical constructions, and new constructions are presented in familiar lexical material.

The deeper, and the more compactly lexical and grammatical phenomena are mutually interwoven, the better organized will be their merger in the mind of the learner. Vocabulary work per se thus acquires a new and different quality.

The effort to discover the meaning of vocabulary and grammatical material in the context of the sentence is far more effective than in isolation. For that reason, for example, verb phrases are given, not in the infinitive form, but in sentences. This is especially important for set phrases:

okazat' pomoshch - Ya okazal pomoshch tovarishchu.

okazat' vlianie - Teatr okazal na nego bol'shoe vlianie.

In the examples given above, the verb is devoid of meaning per se. Primary attention, therefore, is centered on the component (the noun). This facilitates understanding, but still does not assure lasting remembrance, since a verb which is devoid of meaning is quickly forgotten (cf. the typical Russian confusion of igrat' rol' and imet' znachenie.)

4) Understanding and the learning of a linguistic phenomenon is still not sufficient for its mastery. The practical use of the linguistic features, both in and, especially important, out of the classroom is indispensable.

Preparation of students for correct self-instruction is an especially important task for the teacher. One cannot just "cram" knowledge -- it is necessary to form definite habits in language study. Students know how to work with a dictionary, to make entries in notebooks, to make up thematic vocabularies, etc. But in the development of speaking, such organizational work turns out to be insufficient.

It is above all necessary to train students to listen to Russian, to listen and to hear, and especially to memorize from audio-perception. (Professor Artemov says in his doctoral dissertation that acoustical influence is more vivid and more effective than visual.)

In terms of long-term retention, however, auditory material disappears very quickly. A practical conclusion follows from this: new material should be introduced orally, then fixed in writing on the board and in the notebooks of students. That is, there should be visual-motor and finally active reporduction of what is heard, and its creative use.

This also reaffirms the advisability of combining various kinds of aids in the teaching of languages: auditory, visual, and motor.

The acquisition of the habit of listening and understanding is an indispensable and a constituent part of the work of developing speech as a means of communication. In their application, however, it is necessary to take into account certain difficulties arising for students, and to consider means for helping them overcome these difficulties.

The first difficulty involves listening to Russian at a normal and not at a reduced rate of speed. At the very beginning, students are not able to catch and understand even a text which is comprehensible to them as far as vocabulary and grammar are concerned, if it is spoken at a normal tempo.

Special studies with a tape recorder are therefore recommended for developing a habit of perceiving speech at a normal tempo.

L. V. Shcherba in "Subjective and Objective Method in Phonetics," (Izbrannye raboty po yazykoznaniyu, LGU, 1958) observes that a recorded text which we understand seems clear to us. As a matter of fact, "it turns out that we ourselves, depending, of course, on our own language habits, supplement what is in fact not in the text, or what is very poorly transcribed." In our own language, we ignore what is not important (tempo, rapid speech, etc.) R. Jakobson makes analogous observations (The New in Linguistics, 1962)

It is very difficult for a foreigner to acquire the habit of compensating for such omission because of his limited linguistic experience, but this is a very important habit.

Thus students, who are really quite good, are bewildered when they meet the following statement in Pushkin's The Captain's Daughter: "Pora Petrushu v polk." In their experience only one correct rendition is possible: "Pora Petrushe v polk."

Acquiring the habit of supplementing a text out of one's own experience is the very development of feeling for language. The initiation of this kind of work can obviously follow only from an understanding and an active use of many kinds of incomplete sentences. This is especially important for conversational speech.

It is desirable that classrooms dialogues sound natural, and naturalness often involves the use of incomplete sentences. Dialogues such as this, for example, should be shortened to a minimum: "Were you at the theater yesterday? -- Yes, I was at the theater. -- What did you see? --

I saw the ballet Swan Lake. -- Did you like it? -- Yes, I liked the ballet Swan Lake very much." A more natural rendition would be: "Were you at the theater yesterday? -- Yes, I was. -- What did you see? -- The ballet Swan Lake. -- Did you like it? -- Yes, very much."

For all its correctness, the former dialogue looks artificial and lifeless. Another method of developing the habit of supplementing texts is the repeated reading of a lesson, story, etc., which has already been worked through and is well known. The student, having begun the reading of a sentence, can reproduce its conclusion. This also facilitates a command of idiomatic expressions and control of their use.

It is also essential to conduct special work in the training of memory, especially so-called "short memory", which makes it possible to reproduce what has just been heard.

The training of short memory ought to begin with the reporduction of short phrases and their gradual lengthening. At the very beginning, a phrase should consist only of familiar words. Later on, one or two unknown words may be included, but not more, since otherwise the task will become too difficult.

For the training of short memory special exercises can be used such as those recommended by Z. M. Tsvetkova: reproduction of a text through entries in which only verbs, preposition, and conjunctions are given. Blanks are put in place of all other words, and students are to repeat the entire text phrase after phrase.

It is very important to teach students to reproduce a phrase by separate logical and intonational units, i.e. to train students to make natural those pauses which occur in an inadequate tempo of speech, by way of making these forced pauses approximate the natural articulation of speech.

The correction of mistakes in oral speech can become a very good means of developing habits of oral speech and especially a means of training the short

memory. The continual demand of the teacher, to repeat a correct variation of the sentence said by a certain student, serves this purpose well.

Very important too is the habit of repeating exactly and consciously a phrase that has just been heard, to know how to keep in mind and then reproduce what has been heard in a conversation, over the radio, in the theater, etc.

There are, in addition, a number of subjective factors which have great significance in learning a foreign language, inasmuch as they often hasten the process of language mastery, while sometimes also impeding it.

The personal interest of students significantly increases the activity of their consciousness, and consequently, also the thoroughness of their mastery of the linguistic material (for example, when they are working on texts of their specialty).

The best form of any exercise for the development of speaking is the creation of a life situation in the lesson. The relationship of listeners to the subject has great significance.

It is necessary to evoke interest--a creative, emotional relationship between students and the subject dealt with in speaking so that they will want to speak, but at the same time, it is necessary to create conditions for the use, repetition, and reinforcement of precisely this given material.

It is expedient to reinforce new grammatical and lexical material in communicative speaking exercises in the form of linguistic activity rather than in the form of insertion exercises. Situations are developed for students in which given constructions can be used, e.g., the future tense in such subjects as: Your Plans for the Future; What Will you Be Doing on Sunday?; the imperative in such subjects as: Explain to a Passer-By How to Get to Gorky Street, How to Order Dinner in a Cafeteria, How to Buy a Ticket to the Theater, etc.

The linguistic activity can also involve the explanation of a situation in

which a given form or construction can be used, e.g., in the use of aspects of the verb:

Ya ne otkryval okno. (There was no action.)

Ya ne otkryl okno. (I couldn't.)

On ne prishel. (We are waiting for him.)

On ne prikhodil. (Statement of fact.)

In speaking about exercises for the development of speaking, one ought to distinguish two basic requirements for these exercises as preparatory to speaking, as well as for speaking per se: (a) maximum consciousness of the atmosphere of intercommunication in the lesson is indispensable; (b) the transference of the linguistic material mastered in keeping with one situation, subject, or text to other circumstances, situation, etc. is indispensable. In other words, it is necessary to create through precisely this material a readiness for intercommunication.

Some among us consider that they are teaching oral speech, whereas in fact they are teaching the pronouncing of written speech which is addressed to no one. Speech has to be communicative. Consciousness of the existence of speaking situations is vital.

The closer the exercises is to natural intercourse, the more useful and valuable it is. In this connection it is difficult to over-estimate the significance of work on the question-answer system. Questions and answers can be used at any stage of instruction, but it is very important that the chief types of questions be elaborated, and that the correct reaction to a given question be produced in students. The skill is not just to grasp the essence of the question, but also the form which the answer is expected to assume. (For example, answers to such general questions as: How were you occupied yesterday?; What were you doing?; What kind of material is this?; What sort of task is this?; etc.)

More useful than isolated or chance questions is the creation of situations

in lessons which are reminiscent of natural events. It is good to search for and select appropriate communicative situations as they exist in the lives, circumstances, and in the past of students themselves. The result is less restraint in the mutual interaction of students and teacher.

Exercises teaching dialog speaking deserve greater attention than those developing monologue. There are many kinds of speaking by dialogue:

(1) memorization of a dialogue;

(2) preparation of a dialogue similar to one given (and sometimes memorized);

(3) presentation of the beginning of a dialogue, the task being to complete it;

(4) dialogue from pictures;

(5) dialogue in which a translator takes part;

(6) dialogue as dramatization; students are given a situation, roles are distributed.

In working on a text it is, of course, necessary to diversify the kinds of work and to change the character of the retelling.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to say that at present there is wide and acute recognition of the indispensability of developing and substantiating the methods of conducting the development of speaking which are directed to the quickest possible mastery of the language.

An exploitation of general principles in keeping with concrete linguistic material and specific groups of students is a necessity.

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